

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
11 July 1985

INTERNATIONAL

Kampuchean calls for more US help to resolve nation's conflict

INTERVIEW

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Peking



Sihanouk wants US to persuade Vietnam to talk

The United States should get more involved in finding a solution for Kampuchea (Cambodia), says Prince Norodom Sihanouk, leader of the coalition of Kampuchean resistance forces fighting Vietnam's occupation of his country.

Speaking to foreign journalists this week at his residence in Peking, Kampuchea's exiled leader said he wants the US to persuade Peking, Moscow, and Hanoi to be "reasonable, to persuade them to talk, to hold an international conference," referring to his proposal for a conference on Kampuchea like the 1954 Geneva conference on Indochina.

The voluble former monarch, who ruled from 1941 to 1955 and again from 1960 to 1970, welcomed US assistance. On Tuesday the House of Representatives approved \$5 million in military and economic aid to the

noncommunists. But Sihanouk said that, unlike another Kampuchean resistance leader, Son Sann, he did not ask the US for help.

He claimed the military assistance he received from the Chinese was sufficient, and that US aid could be used for "social" purposes — to feed and care for his fighters and their families. He said that if the CIA has been providing assistance to his forces in Kampuchea, as reported last weekend in the Washington Post, it was without his knowledge.

Sihanouk said the fears of some US politicians — that any aid provided to the noncommunist resistance might slip into the hands of the communist Khmer Rouge — were groundless.

"No, no, no," he said emphatically. "The Khmer Rouge don't need your money. The Chinese give them everything they want."

China has also recently increased its military assistance to the noncommunist forces, Sihanouk says. He said China was now aiding 70,000 resistance troops. Some 50,000 of these troops belong to the Khmer Rouge, he said.

China recently gave light weapons to the leaders of the two noncommunist factions, Son Sann and himself, for an additional 2,000 men, Sihanouk added.

The Prince affirmed his support for a political solution in Kampuchea, including the proposal for indirect talks with the Vietnamese made this week by the foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meeting in Malaysia.

But he said political reality requires the involvement in such talks of all warring parties, including the Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh, as well as the major powers that have interests in the region.

On the whole, Sihanouk was pessimistic about the restoration of Kampuchea's independence and neutrality in his lifetime.